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Sen. Toy's bill to create School Safety Zones signed into law

LANSING – Senate Bill 617, which prohibits convicted sex offenders from living, working, or loitering within 1,000 feet of school property, has been signed into law by the governor, announced state Senator Laura Toy, R-Livonia.

“This is a common sense measure to help protect Michigan’s children,” said Toy. “I was proud to sponsor this legislation and am happy to see it signed into law.”

Senate Bill 617 amends the state’s Sex Offender Registration Act by defining “school safety zones” and banning individuals registered under the act from seeking residence or employment, and from loitering, in these zones. The bill contains an exception for those already living or working within 1,000 feet of a school, and for minors living with their parents.

“This law will stop convicted sex offenders from being able to move or loiter near our schools where they can prey on children,” said Toy. “Parents expect that when they send their children off to school that they will be protected from harm. The safety zones established by this law will help to ensure a safe learning environment in and around Michigan’s schools.”

In addition to Toy’s bill, 17 other bills were signed into law to protect children from sexual predators. Included were bills that:

- Require background checks on employees in public schools and day care centers
- Allow evidence of prior sex crimes to be considered as character evidence at trial
- Prevent teachers who are convicted sex offenders from returning to the classroom

“This legislation makes Michigan a leader in protecting its children from sexual predators,” said Toy. “Nationwide there have been some very high profile cases of abduction and sexual abuse against children in recent memory. These measures move our state in the right direction in terms of doing all we can to prevent these types of tragic incidents.”

This marks Toy’s second bill signing in less than a month. In August the Governor signed Toy’s bill to help disabled veterans secure state contracts.

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